Notice of Grant Opportunity
(#12-RT01-A01)

Race to the Top, Phase 3
http://www.nj.gov/education/rttt3/

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Acting Commissioner of Education

February, 2012

Application Due Date: March 14, 2012

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
PO Box 500
Trenton, NJ 08625-0500

http://www.state.nj.us/education

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When responding to this Notice of Grant Opportunity (NGO), applicants must also access the Electronic Web-Enabled Grant (EWEG) system at http://homeroom.state.nj.us. No paper applications will be accepted.

SECTION 1 – GRANT PROGRAM INFORMATION

1.1. **Description of the Grant Program**: The State's comprehensive educational reform vision is to ensure that all children, regardless of life circumstances, graduate from high school ready for college and career. The Race to the Top Phase 3 (RTTT3) subgrant program will help New Jersey greatly advance its priority initiatives so this vision can be realized. On December 22, 2011, New Jersey received $37,847,648 from RTTT3 to support the following initiatives:

- The development of a model curriculum by Fall 2012, aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and with a focus on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) to support the statewide transition to the CCSS;
- The development of an Instructional Improvement System (IIS), an online portal to deliver model curriculum, formative assessments, data reporting, professional development resources, and other curricular resources aligned to the CCSS, to the school-level;
- The transition to new principal and teacher evaluation systems; and
- Support for the State's charter application and renewal review cycles.

For a complete description of the State's plan for RTTT3, read the State's application at: http://www.nj.gov/education/rttt3/
Please note that the State's plan is still under review by the US Department of Education (USDOE) and is subject to minor changes.

By law, 50 percent of the grant award will be invested by the State in the above priorities, and 50 percent will be awarded directly to participating LEAs to use in ways that align with the State's plan. Allocations for each participating LEA will be determined based on each LEA's relative share of funding under Part A of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Official allocations will be calculated once the count of all participating LEAs is finalized, on or around **Feb. 16, 2012.** Please note that only Title I LEAs will receive direct RTTT3 funding allocations as a "participating LEA." If an LEA that does not receive Title I funding chooses to opt in to RTTT3, it may do so as an "involved LEA," and will not receive direct RTTT3 allocations, however it *will* be eligible for specific subgrants from the 50 percent share of the State's allocation, and gain access to the community of practice of RTTT3 participating LEAs, which could include professional development, webinars, and other communication related to specific elements of the State's plan.

Participating LEAs must use their funds to support initiatives aligned with the State's plan and initiatives. Participating LEAs must spend their allocations on the following areas to promote student achievement:

- Supporting the transition to the CCSS by implementing approved professional development that is aligned to the CCSS, including but not limited to, professional development associated with the State's model curriculum (available in Fall 2012);
- Implementing the instructional improvement system (IIS) across schools;
- Improving STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) education at the elementary and secondary school level by utilizing approved STEM professional

development, including but not limited to, professional development on the State model curriculum, and/or participation in the Progressive Math Initiative or Progressive Science Initiative;
- Implementing new principal and teacher evaluation systems, including but not limited to, approved professional development and training for teachers and principals;
- Costs associated with improving and/or expanding charter schools; and
- Other expenses directly aligned to the State's plan may be proposed in an LEA's scope of work, however are subject to Department approval.

Participating Title I LEAs may select **one or more areas** on which to focus their funds. The award period will be 7/1/2012 – 11/30/2015.

1.2 **Eligibility to apply for funding**: New Jersey Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and Charter Schools that received a 2011-2012 Title I-A allocation are eligible to apply. LEAs and Charter Schools that **did not** receive a 2011-2012 Title I-A allocation for that year are **not** eligible to apply for RTTT3 **funding**. However, all LEAs are eligible to participate in the program, either as a "Participating LEA" or as an "Involved LEA."

A final list of participating Title I LEAs will be posted on the NJDOE RTTT3 website at http://www.nj.gov/education/rttt3/ on or about **February 16, 2012**.

1.3 **Federal Fiscal Accountability Transparency Act (FFATA)**: All applicants must have a valid DUNS number and maintain current registration with the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) database for the life of this grant program. No award will be made to an applicant not in compliance with FFATA.

1.4 **Statutory/Regulatory Source and Funding**: The scope of work must be designed and implemented in conformance with all applicable state and Federal Regulations. The RTTT3 program is authorized under section 14006 of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and is 100% federally funded under Public Law 112-10, the Department of Defense and Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act, 2011 (USDOE award number B413A120008, CFDA 84.413A). A total of $18,923,824 is available for this grant program.

Allocations to eligible LEAs are based on each LEA's relative share of 2011-2012 funding under Title I, Part A of the ESEA, sometimes referred to as the "section 14006(c) subgrants." The allocations are for the entire 41 month grant program. A list of final allocations, by participating Title I LEA will be posted on the NJDOE's website at http://www.nj.gov/education/rttt3/ on or about **February 16, 2012.**

Please note: Whereas the federal RTTT3 Program guidelines required the use of the Title I-A formula to establish allocations, RTTT3 funds are not governed by Title I regulations.

Final awards are subject to the availability of federal RTTT3 funds.

1.5 **Technical Assistance**: Technical Assistance for participating LEAs will be scheduled in late February 2012 to assist LEAs with their plans. Specific dates for Technical Assistance will

be scheduled and updated on the RTTT3 website at http://www.nj.gov/education/rttt3/. Additionally, throughout the project period the NJDOE will be providing Technical Assistance and outreach on a variety of topics and in a variety of ways that best meet the LEAs' needs.

The NJDOE will establish a networking contact list once all participating LEAs are confirmed for LEAs to use to assist in planning and implementation of the RTTT3 program. Participating LEAs are encouraged to use this networking list for enhancing communication and collaboration to implement their scopes of work. In advance of completing a scope of work, please review the RTTT3 FAQ documents located on the USDOE website, found here: http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/phase3-resources.html

In addition, please review the State's RTTT3 application, found here: http://www.nj.gov/education/rttt3/

1.6   Application Submission: The RTTT3 application must be submitted electronically through the Electronic Web-Enabled Grant (EWEG) system (found at http://homeroom.state.nj.us). Paper copies of an application will not be accepted in lieu of the electronic application.

The application will be available in the EWEG system **the week of February 20th, 2012**. Instructions for accessing EWEG and completing the fields will be posted at that time on the NJDOE's Race to the Top Phase 3 webpage at http://www.nj.gov/education/rttt3/

1.7   Application Deadline: Complete applications must be submitted by **4 pm, Wednesday, March 14, 2012**.

1.8   Programmatic and Fiscal Reporting Requirements: Below is the schedule for programmatic and fiscal reporting, **subject to change based on allocation amount and USDOE reporting requirements.** Any changes to reporting requirements, as specified by USDOE and/or NJDOE will be posted on the RTTT3 website. Participating LEAs should use the schedule below to build their plans until otherwise notified by NJDOE. Please check this link often for frequent updates and information: http://www.nj.gov/education/rttt3/

Year 1 (2012)
Interim 1   July 1, 2012 – September 30, 2012 (due October 31, 2012)
Year 1 Progress   July 1, 2012 – December 31, 2012 (due January 31, 2013)

Year 2 (2013)
Interim 1   January 1, 2013 – March 31, 2013 (due April 30, 2013)
Interim 2   January 1, 2013 – June 30, 2013 (due July 31, 2013)
Interim 3   January 1, 2013 – September 30, 2013 (due October 31, 2013)
Year 2 Progress   January 1, 2013 – December 31, 2013 (due January 31, 2014)

Year 3 (2014)
Interim 1   January 1, 2014 – March 31, 2014 (due April 30, 2014)

Interim 2   January 1, 2014 – June 30, 2014 (due July 31, 2014)
Interim 3   January 1, 2014 – September 30, 2014 (due October 31, 2014)
Year 3 Progress   January 1, 2014 – December 31, 2014 (due January 31, 2015)

Year 4 (2015)
Interim 1   January 1, 2015 – March 31, 2015 (due April 30, 2015)
Interim 2   January 1, 2015 – June 30, 2015 (due July 31, 2015)
Interim 3   January 1, 2015 – September 30, 2015 (due October 31, 2015)
Year 4 Final   January 1, 2015 – November 30, 2015 (due December 31, 2015)

SECTION 2 – PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Please note that the passage of the School District Accountability Act (A5 a/k/a P.L. 2007, c.53) places additional administrative requirements and restrictions on the travel of school district personnel. The applicant is urged to be mindful of these requirements and restrictions as they may impact the ability of school district personnel to participate in the activities sponsored by this program.

2.1. __Project Requirements__. Applicants may use funds in support of **one or more** project areas delineated below. In making your decision on which projects to fund, consider what best addresses the needs of the LEA and the scope that can be supported by the size of the allocation available.

For **each** selected project that an LEA chooses to implement:

1. Establish a local goal (or goals) for the LEA for the entire project period.
2. For each goal, develop local objectives (performance targets) for each grant year.
3. For each objective, develop indicators or key milestones (the means by which you measure success).

The Activity Plan (for each selected project area) should flow from the development of the goal and objectives. Activity Plans must include:

- individual tasks;
- personnel responsible;
- timeframe in which each activity will be performed; and
- any applicable documentation that will provide evidence of meeting key milestones, indicators, and goals

All projects should align with the State's plan. Please refer to the State's application, which may be found at: http://www.nj.gov/education/rttt3/
Please note that the State's plan is still under review by the US Department of Education (USDOE) and is subject to minor changes.

In designing the workflow for your project(s), structure each project using the annual project periods listed in Section 1.8.

For **each** selected project area, the applicant must also provide a Project Description describing the overall project to be implemented by the LEA. Please be concise.

All application information must be entered and submitted through the online EWEG system. Instructions for accessing EWEG and completing the fields will be posted online (please refer to the link found in Section 1.6 of this NGO). **As the EWEG system is primarily a data collection system, applicants would be well-advised to begin planning out their project(s) in advance of the EWEG application going online.**

Project Area 1. Professional Development and technology supports to advance the transition to Common Core State Standards (CCSS) *(xref: section B3 of NJDOE RTTT3 application).*

In Fall 2012, the State will release model curriculum with unit-based student learning objectives (SLOs) and assessments aligned to the CCSS, as a tool for all LEAs to support the transition to the CCSS. Professional development and training will be made available as well. For more information about the State's plan to develop model curriculum aligned to CCSS, including key milestones, timelines, and goals that should align to any scope of work designed by participating LEAs, please refer to the State's RTTT3 application found at: http://www.nj.gov/education/rttt3/.

Participating LEAs may use their allocations toward implementing this model curriculum, or other professional development that is proven to be aligned with the CCSS and meets the guidelines described below.

In addition, LEAs may use their allocations toward school-level technology improvements to assist in the transition to the online Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessments in 2014-15. Subject to current infrastructure, LEAs may need to make technology improvements, such as purchasing new computers or increasing network bandwidth in order to access these assessments. Additional information for how to budget for technology specifications will be made available via technical assistance in February and posted RTTT3 website at http://www.nj.gov/education/rttt3/
.
For all professional development under this area, the LEA must demonstrate in the application how the professional development opportunities selected are aligned with the CCSS or the NJ Model Curriculum. The RTTT3 website has more information from Student Achievement Partners on how to ensure instructional materials and curriculum are aligned to the CCSS. Participating LEAs should use their Project Description to explain in detail, the professional development that it is requesting funding for, and describe its alignment to the CCSS. NJDOE will work with participating LEAs during the scope of work review phase to ensure alignment and approve or deny specific professional development.

Allowable professional development includes the following areas:
- to help teachers understand the new content requirements of CCSS;
- to develop engaging lessons designed to meet CCSS, or model curriculum SLOs;
- to develop formative assessments to assess student progress on CCSS and SLOs;
- to scaffold learning for English Language Learners (ELL) and/or students with disabilities;
- to build out full units of lessons; and
- to facilitate lesson planning aligned to SLOs.

If professional development is requested on approved intervention models that are aligned to the CCSS (such as Fraction Nation), applicants must provide evidence in the Project Description that the professional development specified is appropriate.

Licenses for online resource exchanges aligned to CCSS are permissible only in Years 2-4.

All professional development must be rigorous, sustained and ongoing. Teachers must have the opportunity to obtain further assistance following the initial professional development session.

Project Area 2. Implementation of the Instructional Improvement System (IIS) platform
(xref: section C3i of NJDOE RTTT3 application).

The NJDOE will develop an online Instructional Improvement System (IIS) to support participating LEAs in accessing Common Core State Standards-aligned model curriculum, formative assessments, student-level data reports, and more. The IIS will be launched for the 2013-2014 academic year and will include the following components:

- A web-based portal housing CCSS-aligned model curriculum including CCSS-aligned student learning objectives (SLOs) and six-week unit assessments;
- Model formative assessments and an item bank for teacher-developed formative assessments;
- An instructional material rating system that will empower districts and schools to select the instructional resources, materials, programs, and technology-based supports best suited to meet the needs of all students, including ELLs, students with disabilities, and low-achieving students. Ratings will be determined using a quality rating system designed by the NJDOE with input from State experts, and recognition will be given to teachers, schools, and districts that submit high-quality resources such as model lessons and performance tasks;
- An assessment reporting tool aligned with NJ SMART that produces reports by learning objective at the student, teacher, school, and district levels;
- Online professional development resources for teachers and school leaders, including CCSS videos and webinars; and,
- A mechanism for teachers, school-based staff, district personnel, and NJDOE to provide feedback on the system that will be incorporated into the IIS on an ongoing basis.

NOTE to LEAs:

- The NJDOE will fund a portion of the overall cost to design, procure, and operate the IIS.
- The NJDOE will fund implementation of the IIS in all Priority schools and in select Focus schools where a great need for quality curriculum, assessment, and data-driven instruction has been identified, beginning in Fall of 2013 *(Note: designations of Priority and Focus occur within the new NJ accountability system as a part of its ESEA flexibility request. A list of Priority and eligible Focus schools will be posted on the NJDOE's website following approval of ESEA flexibility in late Spring 2012).*
- Up to $3 million in additional subgrants for LEAs to support IIS implementation will be made available **at a later date** through a separate, competitive grant program.
- All LEAs have the option to use local funds to implement IIS.

It is anticipated that the IIS will be operational in the Fall of 2013 (RTTT3 Project Year 2); Applicants that wish to budget funds for this purpose may budget them in years 2, 3 and 4 as appropriate.

For more information about the State's IIS plan, including key milestones, timelines, and goals that should align to any scope of work designed by participating LEAs, please refer to the State's RTTT3 application found at: http://www.nj.gov/education/rttt3/

Eligible Expenditures for IIS implementation may be used for:

Technology improvements	Subject to current infrastructure, LEAs may need to make technology improvements, such as purchasing new computers or increasing network bandwidth.
IIS school setup fee	Approximately $700 per school to cover the cost of installing the IIS and any minor network/equipment modifications.
IIS system operating cost	Approximately $7 per student to cover the cost of the ongoing operating and license expense.
IIS professional development	Approximately $50 per teacher to cover the cost of initial IIS training and instruction, plus $12.50 per teacher per year for follow up professional development.

Project Area 3: Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM)

In Fall 2012, the State will release model curriculum with unit-based student learning objectives (SLOs) and assessments aligned to the CCSS, as a tool for all LEAs to support the transition to the CCSS.   Professional development and training will be made available as well. For more information about the State's plan to develop model curriculum aligned to CCSS, including key milestones, timelines, and goals that should align to any scope of work designed by participating LEAs, please refer to the State's RTTT3 application found at: http://www.nj.gov/education/rttt3/.

In an effort to address the STEM priority in RTTT3, the State will create Science and K-12 Mathematics units within the model curriculum that include performance tasks involving the use of technology in real-world applications. For more information about the State's STEM plan, including key milestones, timelines, and goals that should align to any scope of work designed by participating LEAs, please refer to the State's RTTT3 application found at: http://www.nj.gov/education/rttt3/

Participating LEAs may use their allocations towards implementing this model curriculum, or other professional development that is proven to be aligned with the CCSS and meets the guidelines described below.

For all professional development under this area, the LEA must demonstrate in the application how the professional development opportunities selected are aligned with the CCSS or the NJ Model Curriculum.

Eligible Expenditures for STEM projects include:

- **Implementation of the Progressive Science Initiative and/or the Progressive Mathematics Initiative (PSI/PMI) program(s) developed by the New Jersey Center for Teaching and Learning (http://njctl.org).** PSI/PMI supports high levels of student achievement in physics, chemistry, biology and all K-12 mathematics.

  Required components include:
  - PSI and/or PMI led content-driven professional development;
  - Budgeted funds for the necessary technology to properly implement PSI and/or PMI (i.e., interactive whiteboards, etc.);
  - Evidence provided by the LEA that throughout the grant period the PSI/PMI model is being employed

  NOTE: A maximum of 25% of the LEA's total grant allocation may be used to support the implementation of this initiative. More information on PSI/PMI will be made available on the RTTT3 website.

- **Professional development to support classroom transition to Common Core State Standards (CCSS) curriculum and assessments, with a specific focus on Science and/or Math curriculum.**

  Required components include:
  - Professional development on the development of science tasks that integrate math into real world problems and tasks;
  - Professional development for science teachers to align their classroom practices to the literacy standards in the CCSS;

  NOTE: A maximum of 25% of the LEA's total grant allocation may be used to support the implementation of this initiative.

All professional development must be rigorous, sustained and ongoing. Teachers must have the opportunity to return for further assistance.

Project Area 4. Implementation of New Teacher and Leader Evaluation Systems) *(xref: section D2ii of NJDOE RTTT3 application).*

As the State moves toward full implementation of a new teacher and leader evaluation system, it must ensure that LEAs have the fiscal and human capital necessary to prepare for this transition. RTTT3 funds may be used to support the costs associated with this transition and implementation. Allowable expenditures related to evaluations are described in more detail below.

For more information on the State's plan for teacher and leader evaluation systems, including key milestones, timelines, and goals that should align to any scope of work designed by participating LEAs, please refer to the State's RTTT3 application found here: http://www.nj.gov/education/rttt3/.

Eligible Expenditures for implementation of new teacher and leader evaluation systems include:

- **Costs for teacher practice evaluation framework provider services**. Costs may include:

    o Introductory/overview session(s) to engage stakeholders, explain the framework, customize the observation instruments and plan the implementation.

    o Evaluation and framework training, certification and ongoing support for evaluators and coaches.

    o Evaluator audit for scoring accuracy and reliability and recalibration training.

    o "Train-the trainer" training for districts that choose this training model, including any training support/tools.

    o Training for all teachers in the district on the teaching practice framework, standards of effective practice and how they will be evaluated.

    o Training materials and books, as well as tools that support training and professional development associated with the teacher effectiveness evaluation framework.

- **Internet-based performance management system** to collect, analyze and report teacher practice evaluation data via an electronic and/or Internet-based performance management system.

- **Classroom observation cameras** and other equipment required for the evaluation system, including hand-held computers for recording observation data.

- **Other expenditures**, as approved by the Department, related to *either the teacher or principal evaluation implementations*. Participating LEAs must explain such proposed expenditures in detail.

Ineligible costs:

- Costs associated with the writing and/or the preparation of bid documents
- Substitutes and stipends associated with activities within the scope of the grant
- Classroom instructional materials
- Equipment not mentioned as allowable above (i.e., smart boards, podcast equipment, printers, etc.)

- Capital improvements
- Facilities rental
- Salaries of administrative or clerical personnel

Project Area 5: Charter School Improvements and Expansion *(xref: section F2 of NJDOE RTTT3 application).*

In alignment with the State's application, the Department is committed to improving its support to charter schools and networks, in service of increasing the number of high-quality seats for students in New Jersey. Through RTTT3, the Department will increase its capacity to improve its charter approval and renewal application cycles. Participating charter LEAs are encouraged to use RTTT3 funds in ways that improve or expand operations and increase the achievement outcomes of its students, including but not limited to: utilizing opportunities to implement and share research-proven best practices and methods, participate or create professional development, and use or analyze data.

Non-charter LEAs are also permitted to expend their allocations on charter-related initiatives that align with the State's plan; for example, an LEA may seek to undertake joint projects with charter schools within its geographical jurisdiction. The Department will approve RTTT3 charter-related expenditures from all LEAs on a case-by-case basis; ineligible expenditures are listed below.

For more information on the State's plan for improving and expanding charter school options, including key milestones, timelines, and goals that should align to any scope of work designed by participating LEAs, please refer to the State's RTTT3 application found here: http://www.nj.gov/education/rttt3/.

Ineligible expenditures:
- Facility or capital expenses
- Costs associated with board activities or fundraising
- Salaries for clerical/administrative staff

2.2 Budget Requirements

In order to meet federal data collection requirements, for **each** project area selected, there must be a separate budget, by project year for the entire four years of this grant. A spreadsheet (format to be provided by NJDOE) showing this level of detail is to be uploaded in EWEG as part of the application. Applicants will also enter the budget in EWEG so that reimbursement requests and payments can be made through EWEG. Please note that the budget entered in EWEG will be for the entire four year project period.

For each item of cost, the applicant must provide a direct link to the goals, objectives and activities in the Program Activity Plan that support the proposed cost. Adequate cost detail must be provided for each item of cost.

Reminder: Up to 25% of the LEA allocation may be used (under Project Area 3 -STEM) for implementing PSI/PMI training and programs. Up to 25% of the LEA allocation may be used (under Project Area 3 -STEM) for professional development to support classroom transition to Common Core State Standards (CCSS) curriculum and assessments. No LEA allocation percentage caps apply to Project Areas 1, 2, 4, and 5.

The provisions of A-5/P.L. 2007, c.53 contain additional requirements concerning prior approvals, as well as expenditures related to travel. Unless otherwise specified, the following restrictions apply to all grant programs:

- No reimbursement for in-state overnight travel (meals and/or lodging)
- No reimbursement for meals in conjunction with any in-state travel
- Mileage reimbursement is capped at $.31/mile for all travel (in-state and out of state)

Ineligible costs
- Indirect costs
- Entertainment
- Costs for capital renovations or construction
- Costs not permitted under OMB Circular A-87
- Costs not directly associated with the selected project area(s); refer to project area(s) for further information.

Section 3 – Administrative Information.

3.1   Review of Applications: Applications will be reviewed by Department staff knowledgeable in the content of the project area(s) selected. Applicants may be contacted by Department staff during the review process for clarifications and/or further information, as needed. **Applicants deemed non-responsive may lose their ability to receive RTTT3 funding.**

3.2   Open Public Records Act (OPRA): Pursuant to the Open Public Records Act P.L. 2001, c. 404, all applications for discretionary grant funds received September 1, 2003 or later, as well as the evaluation records associated with these applications, will become matters of public record upon the completion of the review process.

3.3   Award documents: The final award document (and related terms and conditions) will be issued to the LEA through the EWEG system upon final approval of the LEA application.

3.4   Administration of funds: RTTT3 funds must be tracked by the LEA by each selected project area. RTTT3 funds may not be co-mingled with other funds.

3.5   Carryover of funds: In the application, the EWEG system will collect a budget that spans the entire four years of the grant. Applicants will not be required to create an amendment in EWEG in order to carryover any unexpended funds from one grant period to the next.

3.6   Payment: Payment will be through the EWEG reimbursement system. Only one reimbursement request (covering all projects in the grant) **per month** may be submitted. Reimbursements will be made in accordance with established NJDOE policy.